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Newsletters

Summer 2002

Issue 2, Summer 2002

Imagining America

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Recommended Citation

Imagining America, "Issue 2, Summer 2002" (2002). *Newsletters - Imagining America*. 15.
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Newsletter

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IA Consortium Members

Save the Date!

September 24, 2002
*Imagining Michigan Conference at
Western Michigan University
in Kalamazoo. Co-sponsors:
WMU and The Arts Council of
Greater Kalamazoo.*

November 3-5, 2002
*Imagining America National
Conference at University of
Michigan, Ann Arbor.*

See website for details on both events.

*This newsletter is for you.
It serves Imagining America's
constituency--people who are
doing public cultural work
that links campuses and
communities or who are
interested in such work.*

From the Director Imagining Patriotism?

Public scholarship in the arts and humanities is defined by its explicit hopefulness. Such work is based on the conviction that it is possible for artists and humanists to make original, smart, and beautiful work that matters to particular communities and to higher education. Public scholarship is terrain where invention can be carried out sociably, yielding new relationships, new knowledge, and tangible public goods. The challenge for public scholars is to entertain, in Henry Giroux's phrase, "educated hope." These days, the problem of hope quickly becomes the problem of patriotism. How do we define a positive vision of America? Public scholarship is grounded in local partnerships. It is dedicated to diversity and based on a concrete grasp of the connections between the local and the global. Given these values, can public scholars "do patriotism" in the midst of an overpowering surge of national feeling?

The traumas of 9/11 have made the relationships among the city, the state, and the world palpable. We face a tangle of interlocking crises that are profoundly cultural, historical, ethical, symbolic, and expressive in nature, as well as material, bodily, and economic. I am calling for a more hopeful and eloquent stance by artists and humanists. Does this mean that we are limited to the motifs of national celebration that have dominated the discourse of the mass media and of Washington thus far? No.

Continued on pg. 2

Issue 2, Summer 2002

State Column: Illinois The Biggest Surprise is Always Personal

By Angel Ysaguirre

In Chicago's North Lawndale neighborhood, the high school has dismal test scores and soaring dropout rates. There are more 20-year-old black men in prison or dead than on the streets and in their homes. Yet walk into the social service agency in North Lawndale and you will find people discussing Sappho's poems or Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," the Monroe Doctrine or John Hersey's article on Hiroshima.

In September 2000, the Illinois Humanities Council (IHC) and Bard College started Illinois' first of two Clemente Courses in the Humanities, which the IHC calls the Odyssey Project. The Odyssey Project is an eight-month-long college-level course in philosophy, literature, U.S. history, art history, writing and critical thinking for people who are poor. It is taught by tenure-track scholars who expose students to texts one might expect to study in the first year at a prestigious university.

We had a set of assumptions as well as uncertainties. We believed, as Earl Shorris argues in *New American Blues: From Poverty Through Democracy*, that a solid education in the humanities can equip the poor with the raw materials for figuring out and implementing their own solutions to poverty. This kind of education, Shorris suggests, leads to greater participation in political life.

We assumed the poor wanted such an education. But we also had concerns: about transplanting the stuffy academy to the inner city, finding enough interested professors, keeping the quality high. We knew the Odyssey Project would increase the IHC's visibility with foundations, in social service

Continued on pg. 4

Poetry in the Streets of Berkeley

The City of Berkeley, the University of California—Berkeley, and local poets and artists have joined forces to fill the streets of Berkeley with poetry. Addison Street between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street has been designated Berkeley's downtown Arts District. The sidewalks of this street are being inlaid with a colored band of art and poetry rich with local history. IA board member and former Poet Laureate of the United States, Robert Hass has selected poems by California poets to be embedded in the concrete.

"For me, this sidewalk project is Imagining America in action," says Bob Hass. *"Designers, artists, local historians, poets, and readers converged to build a public place through poetry."*

Mary Ann Merker from Berkeley's Office of Economic Development tells us that the project was recently awarded the California Association of Local Economic Development Project's 2002 Grand Prize

Keep going to page four for selections of Berkeley sidewalk poetry.

Continued from pg. 1

There is an urgent need for artists and scholars to articulate forms of patriotism that are capacious enough for dissent, ambivalence, and an ongoing debate on the issues. We need to find words for our loyalty to democratic principles rooted in the concrete particulars of our common and separate histories. If we are not able to voice patriotic positions that both identify with democratic idealism and expose failures to realize it in action, we will find ourselves trapped in instant replays of the culture wars of the 1980s. Indeed, that tape is already running.

A report issued by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni revived the culture wars by lambasting a so-called "blame America first" campaign on U.S. campuses. ACTA deplores the following: editorials urging "peaceful responses" such as diplomatic efforts to respond to the attacks of September 11, references at a teach-in to the World War II internment of Japanese Americans, statements at a campus rally about poverty and suffering in other countries. ACTA and similar lobbies seek to divorce goodness from debate. They separate ethics from diverse kinds of historical and political knowledge. Artists and humanists committed to public scholarship should make the alternative case that pursuing knowledge is a democratic virtue, and that the capacity for dissent is, too.

In President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, he invited us to imagine what "a new culture of responsibility could look like." We can, he said, "change our culture." This is precisely what public scholarship is about—the shared work of changing our culture. The President should have asked us to be smarter as well as nicer—to seek a more complex ethic of vocal, informed scholarship and art based on specific identities, interests, and problems.

What is the best way for us to go about this, as public scholars in the cultural disciplines? Are artists and humanists ready to relate patriotism to the inventions and inquiries of our work? Are we ready to deal with patriotism and critique as a both/and proposition?

The November/December 2001 issue of *The New Crisis*, the NAACP magazine, is dedicated to debates on Black patriotism. It was ready with both/and thinking. The editorial

calls for "patriotism and support for the United States from all Americans":

Thoughtful dissent...is one of the highest orders of patriotism. Moreover, dissent is central to our tradition of building a better America. Principled dissent helped end slavery, and segregation, and is still propelling our struggle.

Whether one agrees with the editorial position in support of the war on terrorism—and many contributors to the magazine did not—one sees that this is a dialogic patriotism, negotiating the pressures that move us alternately inside and outside of a sense of "national community."

"There is an urgent need for artists and scholars to articulate forms of patriotism that are capacious enough for dissent, ambivalence, and an ongoing debate on the issues."

The New Crisis surveys a broad range of reaction: support for U.S. military action by the Black Patriots Foundation; sympathy for New York firefighters from Black firemen in St. Louis, despite their criticism that, of New York's 11,200 firefighters on September 11, only 300 were African American; opposition to sending U.S. troops to Afghanistan by delegates to

the U.N. Conference on Racism; the ambivalence of Black members of Congress who supported the resolution giving President Bush war-making authority against the September 11 terrorists—and the vitriol directed at Representative Barbara Lee, who cast the lone dissenting vote.

The arts and humanities have been spoken of as offering "solace." We need the expression of grief, witness, and testimony, yes. But we also need action, including educational and imaginative action. Julia Reinhold Lupton, member of Imagining America's National Advisory Board and Director of Humanities Out There at UC-Irvine, outlines a strategy for patriotism now: "The answer...is not to throw out the concept of citizenship." Rather we should "turn to...a 'critical liberalism'...recoverable... through the creation of civic partnerships that render manifest, perform publicly, bring into actualization, the emancipatory promise of participatory democracy."

Excerpted from "Intellectual Workbench: Perspectives on Public Scholarship," Harry Boyte, ed. (forthcoming).

Instructions

Please take a moment to fill out the following questionnaire. After you click the "continue" button at the bottom of the form, you will be given a chance to review your submission before it is recorded.



Announcement

New Website Needs User Input to Succeed

Imagining America has launched a new website (www.ia.umich.edu). The most exciting enhancement is a searchable database designed to connect public scholars around the country. Once campus-community project teams start using it to tell others about their work, the database will contain descriptions of short-term projects and on-going programs, as well as up-to-date contact information. A stroll through the IA data base could connect you to networks in your own region, or to people who have solved the very challenges you now face. By entering your program or project into the IA database, you are instantly linked to the thousands of people who visit the site every year. For those early birds that gave our site a test-drive last winter, we'd like to extend sincere thanks. There were the usual glitches, but now we're up and running. We anticipate improving the site in response to user feedback, so please let us hear your suggestions and criticisms.

Enter your project or program into our database today. It only takes a few moments to answer questions about key collaborators and to summarize your activities and experiences.

A network of campus-community humanities programs already exists from coast to coast. Yet many of us still don't know about each other. Help Imagining America strengthen our interlacing web—on the web.

Update

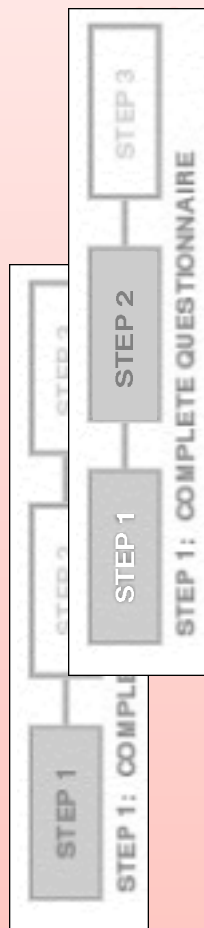
Woodrow's Winners

The doors into and out of campus have been flung wide open by the winners of the 2001 Imagining America Public Scholarship Grants, awarded by IA's founding partner, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. "The Foundation recognizes the interchange between community goals and scholarly endeavor as crucial to both," says Robert Weisbuch, president of the Foundation. "These grants are a brilliant realization of what it means to have scholars contributing to society."

Seven awards of \$10,000 each were distributed. As these examples show, this year's winners tackle issues of real import, approaching them in candid and innovative ways that inspire broader discourse and participation. They include:

- Causes and effects of women's incarceration find expression in a multi-media art installation and study guide, *Thirty Days of Art and Education on Women's Incarceration*. Northeastern Illinois University, Beyondmedia Education and the Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers join forces for this exhibit, which will tour the Chicago area for a month.
- The Rocky Mountain region is quickly becoming more culturally diverse, but educational resources for schoolchildren remain scarce. Africa-Related Resources in the Rocky Mountain Region: Conservation, Culture and Arts is changing that through the efforts of local artists, retailers, state educational institutions and the Foundation for African Resources. The goal is to create a resource guide for K-12 teachers, as well as three days of intensive workshops to kick off the initiative.
- The Desert Rainwater Harvesting Demonstration Project enlightens the present day with the ancient water conservation practices of the Native American and Hispanic communities. The project joins the University of New Mexico's Departments of Anthropology and Art with the Alfonso Ortiz Center for Intercultural Studies, a local landscape architect and a public school. Together they will build permanent xeriscape gardens using time-honored traditions that allow responsible resource conservation.
- Faculty and students in the Department of English at SUNY Albany will create five dramatizations of the impact of technology on contemporary human existence for HumaniTech: Technology Play Project. Their collaborators include playwrights and public performing spaces such as The Capital Repertory Theater, libraries, malls and Albany's state capital plaza.

For full information about Public Scholarship Grant recipients, visit the Foundation website at www.woodrow.org.



Poetry in the Streets of Berkeley Continued

*Look I am dancing,
On the rim of the world
I am dancing.*

Miwok Song

*I never saw a purple cow,
I never hope to see one.
But I can tell you anyhow
I'd rather see than be one.*

*Oh yes, I wrote the
Purple Cow.
I'm saying now I wrote it.
But I can tell you anyhow
I'll kill you if you quote it.*

Gillette Burgess

*Mitya don't let me say
Put the carriage away
I'm not going out any more.
Don't let me say it.*

Malka Heifetz-Tusman

Continued from Page 1

circles, and with audiences we had never before served. But in no way were we certain of success.

The first surprise came from the universities. University administrators and scholars I contacted were supportive of the idea, but not of the curriculum. These administrators were all involved in outreach efforts to this very population and warned that the curriculum would need to be more multicultural if it were to effectively grab students' attention. The administrators also led me to adjunct faculty instead of the tenure-track instructors. So I approached professors directly and saw immediate results. They yearned to teach students like ours using the texts they themselves love, assuming that the poor will also love them—and figure out themselves how to use them.

“University administrators and scholars I contacted were supportive of the idea, but not of the curriculum.”

The next surprise came from the students. De Toqueville reported that Americans love to form association. Odyssey Project students work a full day before coming to class. However, they organized Saturday study groups, developed a calendar of cheap cultural events and organized field trips. They have recently decided to develop a magazine of their works and perform public readings. While we can't measure the impact of this on their political lives, we can imagine how this might be a rehearsal for even greater participation in public life.

Another surprise came in the classroom. The students are superb orators. Students can talk about the choice between loyalty to the state versus one's family with an immediate, personal insight that traditional students cannot. Instructors feel invigorated by such dialogue because students were more likely to take intellectual risks and less likely to give answers that they thought would please the teacher. Faculty reported that the Odyssey Project made them better teachers.

Yet many of these bright students struggled when it came time to translate these same thoughts onto the page. Clemente faculty decided to change their expectations to meet the needs of their students. They are trying out

strategies that range from starting with smaller assignments, writing tutors, and consulting with a professor of rhetoric to help students make a connection between their oral skills and written expression.

Ultimately the biggest surprise is always personal. And, like any important realization, it seems so simple. I now know I had made too many assumptions about the poor. Not that they don't want to work or whatever nonsense we're accustomed to hearing. But the fact that I say "the poor" is, in itself, problematic. After all, the only thing I know about the poor is their income level. I've long known that the inner city is as populated with smart people as our downtowns. But I never knew the ways in which they can be smart, which is to say that I never knew how many ways of being smart there are.

Angel Ysaguirre is the director of programs at the Illinois Humanities Council, where he oversees all programming and program creation.

“The fact that I say ‘the poor’ is, in itself problematic.... the only thing I know about the poor is their income level.”



Humanities student in The Odyssey Project

**Christine Manuel, 2001
Graduation Address**

"When the time came for me to write down what it was that I would say to everyone this afternoon to express my feelings about graduation, I found the task very, very difficult. I thought to myself, were I an artist, I would create a lovely mural in my favorite Impressionist style to illustrate my feelings. If I were a historian, I would take care to choose the most appropriate historical document to make reference to the importance of this day. Were I a poet, I could create the perfect sonnet, beginning with an octave and ending with a sestet. Were I a philosopher, I would have spent the time in a great fast and meditation until I saw nothing but the speech and proceeded to write it from there. And were I a writer, I would have written completely and thoughtfully and organized my thoughts without leaving a single participle dangling. It occurred to me then that I was having so much trouble because I had become all of these things."

Illinois Humanities Council



Be a guest columnist. Tell your state's story. Contact IA for more details.

IA Consortium Founded: The Benefits of Belonging

The New Year marks an invigorating time for Imagining America. A national network is in place and growing. Interest is strong and the level of activity is rising. During our first three years, we began to tap into a new cultural movement that is manifesting itself in the civic, educational and artistic life of the country.

To date, benefits have been free to all interested participants. Now we're launching the second phase of Imagining America, with an expanded capacity to do important public work in the arts and humanities. And we are turning to our primary beneficiaries—colleges and universities—to sustain Imagining America's core activities. Central to our success is the Imagining America Consortium institutional membership campaign. This began in November 2001 with a letter of invitation from University of Michigan President Lee C. Bollinger sent to a large number of university and college presidents and chancellors.

The Imagining America Consortium is a national coalition of colleges and universities. It provides a solid anchor for a growing web of like-minded organizations that realize the benefits of linking campuses and communities

through shared cultural work that benefits K-12 schools, libraries, museums, historical districts, radio stations, parks, and festivals.

The administrators, faculty, and students of IA Consortium member institutions will be immediately connected to like-minded people around the country via:

- *our content-rich newsletter;*
- *position papers and reports on crucial issues by leaders in the humanities;*
- *a website featuring a new searchable data base of projects and programs; and*
- *national and regional conferences.*

In sum, members will enjoy a rich, layered network of resources tailored to the complex needs of programs in the public arts and humanities.

Imagining America is eager to develop new partnerships with national associations committed to public and community engagement, cultural non-profits, and other arts and humanities networks. The Consortium creates a higher-ed alliance that welcomes the chance to collaborate in a spirit of openness and experimentation.

Please tell us if your college or university president would like information about joining the Imagining America Consortium. There are also opportunities for non-profit organizations and national associations to partner with Imagining America on conferences, demonstration projects, information resources, publications, and research. Contact Associate Director Kristin Hass at (734) 615-8370 or kah@umich.edu

The full text of the *Imagining Michigan* resolution can be found on the *Imagining America* web site: www.ia.umich.edu

See also *Imagining Your State*, a web tool kit designed to help build strong campus-community partnerships at the state level: www.iys.umich.edu

Imagining Michigan Conference Focuses on Sustainable Partnerships

At the *Imagining Michigan* (IM) conference in East Lansing last September, participants and presenters investigated the state of the art of campus-community alliances, focusing on the question, "What makes good partnerships?"

The answer was summed up in a five-point resolution passed during the one-day event, hosted by the Center for Great Lakes Culture at Michigan State University. Good partnerships, participants concluded, call for the daily care and feeding of "a common language and a common culture." Partnerships require institutional transparency, so that we can "find each other." Success needs to be celebrated. Finally, sustaining an economy of arts and humanities partnerships demands year-round efforts to nourish relationships beyond the single-project stage.

Imagining Michigan, now in its third year, is a partnership between Michigan colleges and universities, the Michigan Humanities Council, and the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs. *Imagining America*, based at the University of Michigan, works with local co-sponsors to convene the annual meeting.

Four panels showcased initiatives that yielded distinctly different products. First up was a group from Grand Rapids. They described how the Grand Rapids Public Museum and the Native American community joined forces during the making of the Museum's permanent exhibit, *Anishinabek: People of this Place*, provoking major changes in the design of the space. The University of Michigan's Arts of Citizenship Program and Detroit's Matrix Theatre Company shared lessons learned during the creation of a Southwest Detroit oral history and theater project.

Western Michigan University, the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo, the Gilmore Foundation, and the Kalamazoo Institute of Art represented a tradition of collaboration that led to the creation of the city's Epic Center, a home for 13 cultural organizations in

a former department store. And an Interlochen Academy playwright, a community planner from Land Information Access in Traverse City, and the director of the Leelanau Historical Museum mapped out how the arts can foster a nuanced understanding of local material culture and environmental change.

The panels underscored the way in which relationships generated in one project set off a chain reaction of new ones. The *Anishinabek* exhibit network came together again--and expanded--to facilitate a mutually satisfactory solution to the discovery of an ancient Native burial ground on a site shared by a highway improvement project of the Michigan Department of Transportation and a Grand Valley State University parking lot. Repatriation of remains, an exhibit and a park resulted--and the highway got repaired, too.

"The museum showed a commitment throughout the entire institution to listen and act upon input from the Indian community," said potter and storyteller Frank Etta wageshik, who consulted on the exhibit. "It was not just window dressing." Tim Chester, head of the Museum, concurred. "The process has been an amazing journey. Many museums are... temples and the curators are the priests. But in Grand Rapids, through the process of working with the Native community, we've been called to change and we've both changed."

Bill Anderson, Director of the newly-formed Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries, introduced the just-fledged Department in a luncheon speech. The day ended with an exuberant account by Muskegon Community College President Frank Marczak of how educators and cultural activists pooled ideas and resources to launch an annual humanities festival in this growing lakeside city.



Dean Margaret Merrión, Western Michigan University

Board Changes

Thanks to outgoing board member:

We are grateful for **Eric J. Sundquist's** service on the board during his tenure as Dean of the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern. He was a key partner in IA's 2000 national conference in Chicago. Best wishes to him as he returns to the University of California, Los Angeles.

Welcome to two new colleagues:

Julia Reinhard Lupton, Director of Humanities Out There (H.O.T.), University of California--Irvine and Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature. Through H.O.T. graduate students take the lead in creating high school humanities curricula.

Karla FC Holloway, William R. Kenan Professor of African and African American Studies and English, and Assistant Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, Duke University. She has just completed a national speaking tour following the publication of her extraordinary new book, *Passed On: African American Mourning Stories, A Memorial*.

FREE!

Two publications from *Imagining America*

DEMOCRATIC VISTAS IN THE HUMANITIES

by **Richard J. Franke**

Debut issue of our new series, **FORESEEABLE FUTURES**

"How have we been able to draw over 50,000 people to the Chicago Humanities Festival this year? ...One of our main objectives is to make the humanities available to all. We understand access to culture as a fundamental human right. In order to ensure that goal we make virtually all events available for \$5." –Richard J. Franke, winner of the National Medal for the Humanities

Democratic Vistas in the Humanities was the keynote address for *Imagining America's* Fall 2000 conference. The author is Richard J. Franke, winner of the National Medal for the Humanities, a founder of the Chicago Humanities Festival, and retired CEO of John Nuveen & Co. Franke boldly asserts that the humanities play a crucial role in work, public life, entertainment, and the ongoing invention of democracy.

The End of the Beginning: A Report on Imagining America's First Two Years including "*What We Owe the Future*" by Sondra Myers

Like our newsletter and brochure, these reports can be ordered for distribution at conferences and meetings. Let us know how many you would like by contacting Pattie Postel at ppostel@umich.edu or (734) 615-8370.

Imagining America National Advisory Board

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Julia Reinhard Lupton
Director, Humanities Out There, University of California--Irvine and Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature.

Barry Qualls
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David Scobey
Director, Arts of Citizenship Program, U of Michigan

Baraka Selé
World Festival Producer, New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Jerry Yoshitomi
Founding Director (ret.), Japanese-American Cultural Center, Los Angeles

Jamil Zainaldin
Executive Director, Georgia Humanities Council

In the next issue:

*More news about the
Imagining America
Consortium, including
membership roster.*

*Help build Citizen Jane's booklist.
Send us suggestions for our new
bibliography on the public work of
artists, humanists and educators
(ppostel@umich.edu). Here are
two titles to start with:*

***My Place** by Nadia Wheatley,
illustrated by Donna Rawlins.
An Australian children's book
with maps moving backwards in
time through the evolution of a
neighborhood (1988).*

***Weaving a Tapestry of
Resistance: The Places, Power,
and Poetry of a Sustainable
Society** by Sharon E. Sutton,
which studies two elementary
schools and "education as the
practice of weaving" (1996).*

**"My first proposal for undergraduate
education is thus extremely simple: require
every humanities major to be a double
major—the second field being an empirical
one, outside the humanities.... The categories
would be called something like Knowing the
World and Pursuing Curious Interests."**

—William Paulson, *Literary Culture in a World Transformed:
A Future for the Humanities* (2001; Cornell University Press)

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B. Joseph White, Interim President

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